

5/20/14  
Verse 60

When knowledge is spoken of as subjected to the ego  
without considering its ultimate truth,  
even if that ultimate reality is spoken of in this way,  
for one who knows, knowledge does not become other.

Free translation:

Even when a person, oblivious of the absolute status of knowledge,  
speaks of it as his or her private experience, knowledge does not  
become either differentiated from the truth of the knower or  
alienated from the Supreme Word that illuminates all minds.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

Even when knowledge to egoism is subject in any predication,  
And one is unmindful of the ultimate verity of what is said,  
Yet as with the truth, however ultimate, such knowledge  
Can never fall outside the scope of the knowing self.

I'm pretty sure this is the longest of all the class notes ever.  
The class overflowed with important ideas, for which I am loathe  
to apologize. Read them or not at your own pace. I have recently  
heard from a few people that they do read them and get a lot out of  
them, and I am gratified to know this.

Verse 60 is one of those talks where beneath the serene  
surface is a stern lecture of correction. The words in the book don't  
carry the intensity that the Guru's words did, but it is possible to  
imagine it. Near the end Nitya mentions the sting of his words. I  
was one of the ones who was feeling acutely chastised. This is one  
of the lessons that found its mark, instantly changing my attitude.  
It lanced the boil of my smug satisfaction in blaming others that up

till then I considered to be the essence of coolness and the mark of wisdom.

Many of us in the original Atmo class were in our twenties. There was a lot of sneering back and forth between those who liked Nitya's clear intellectual explanations and those who were content to groove on the good vibes he radiated. You didn't have to know anything to warm yourself next to his internal campfire, yet most of those who were content with only that retained little of the warmth after he went somewhere else. Nitya thought we were stupid to separate those two essential aspects of ourselves based on inferior logic, or, if the truth be told, based more on laziness. He was trying his best to ignite a spark in us and fan it into a meaningful blaze, and that required our participation in making it real in some way. It demanded that we pay close attention and not just warm our buns.

Years before, in the first Portland Gurukula, I had been in the anti-intellectual camp myself. I figured getting high and lying on a sunny beach was all the meaning of life I needed, and being around Nitya was like being stoned without any medicaments. Soon he used the Nataraja Guru ploy of breaking my head on *An Integrated Science of the Absolute* to demonstrate my abysmal ignorance and humiliate me about it. One time I asked him about the reason for all that careful, unstoned thinking, and he replied drily that it kept him from growing bored. I'm afraid I've caught the same virus from him. Now I feel like I'd be bored if I didn't have multiple outlets for my interests. But of course what he didn't say was that if you put in some effort you would develop significantly, and if not you wouldn't, as in the line from the Gospel of Thomas: "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

One of the ubiquitous follies of young people is to want to identify with a group or mind set that is better than everyone else's. High school may be the apotheosis of the condition: all the cliques and all the disdain flung at those outside each person's

little peer group. It's pathetic, really. It gets sublimated somewhat as we age (thanks for that word, Eugene!) but is still present in veiled form, and may persist for a lifetime if corrective action isn't taken. This verse provides the antidote.

The first step in self-correction is to ask ourselves how we sequester truth into the bite sized portions we claim as "mine," and lump falsehoods together as "theirs." If we can realize this is what everyone does, we can begin to ease off on our narrow mindedness, which is exactly what it is.

I think I was pricked more than most by the Guru's words because my version of narrow mindedness was to picture myself as broad minded, loving and compassionate. It was extremely uncomfortable to suddenly realize how I was hiding the shadow side of those qualities from myself at least. The realization initiated a very gradual but heartfelt transition to a vastly more generous position. This is one of those conditions where wanting to change and changing are almost entirely different things. *Believing* in a position and actually inhabiting it are quite distinct. Getting past this divide is the thrust of this verse in a nutshell.

Our default position is that the other person needs correcting, but we don't. We have to turn the arrow back on ourselves before we can grow in a healthy way. And we have to look at ourselves as not being "bad" for needing correction, either. All too often when we turn a harsh and critical eye on ourselves, we subvert the learning process. If we can accept that our faults are "perfect" in a way, we can grow with joy, otherwise we'll just be adding to our stockpile of guilt and dissatisfaction. Religion may prey on those feelings, but Vedanta calls for us to throw them out. Bill expressed this very well, that our limitations are not necessarily flaws, they are simply how we see truth. The very nature of existence is to be limited, so limitation is something to celebrate. It makes us unique and interesting! It's only when we become intolerant of ourselves or someone else that we lose our equanimity. Kian described this paradoxical process as perfection perfecting itself.

A lot of hot air (if not blood) is spilled over such ideas as whether you believe in (my) God or not, meant to determine whether you are good or not. Narayana Guru's position is that the existence of something is not affected in the least by what we think of it. This is very fortunate. Otherwise, truth would dry up and blow away as soon as we stopped thinking about it. Nitya explains how to overcome this obstacle:

Universal truth is unaffected by the partial experiencing of it by people. Of course there are often wrangles between people, when each holds out their personal experience as the sole truth with a bigoted, narrow conviction. The first thing to understand is the necessity of neutralizing in our minds the contradictions between varying private experiences of truth, realizing that there will always be different perspectives due to the individual approach we are bound to take. Then at least we will have no need to fight over truth.

The bottom line is this: people fight when they are unsure. Those who know do not fight. It another version of the assertion in Verse 49: "Where there is sorrow there is ignorance, and where there is no ignorance there is no sorrow. You can easily find out whether you are ignorant or not by looking at yourself. If your mind has sorrow, if you are sad or in misery, it means you are in a state of ignorance." Like that, if you fight you are in a state of ignorance.

We are trained to believe that getting the right answer puts us in touch with truth. If you look at humanity from a distance, so many of us are scrambling around digging for the right (or approved) answer in hopes that it will magically solve our problems. The mentality is actually a huge part of our conditioning. The Absolute cannot be conceived in such limited terms. Truth is beyond right or wrong answers, which is lucky because we are all brimming with wrong answers. Nobody scores 100 percent on tests all the time. The Gurukula philosophy does not rely on that kind of belief system, either. It's fine as far as transactional matters go: it produces scientific insights, new

technology, new art, and so forth, and we want that. But merging into truth or ultimate reality or the moment requires a leap out of all such limited modes of thought. It's of another order of magnitude entirely.

Paul has been reading about Zen koans, which pose a kind of riddle to force the mind to relinquish its habitual behavior. The idea isn't to find the answer to the koan riddle, but, as Paul learned recently, to become the question, in a sense. If you refrain from explaining everything intellectually, the mystery becomes an even bigger mystery. Maintaining silence opens the mystery. If you label it you are putting yourself in a box.

I like the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition too: a koan is "a paradox to be meditated upon that is used to train Zen Buddhist monks to abandon ultimate dependence on reason and to force them into gaining sudden intuitive enlightenment." Paul is right that Zen teachers are also aware of the limitations of basing our ideas on getting the right answer, which in turn is based on a fixed notion of right and wrong which is surely inadequate.

Nitya was striving mightily to get his students to rise above their petty concerns to glimpse the grandeur of the vision Narayana Guru so carefully put together in this most amazing work. He sensed that because we were overwhelmed by the complexity of the verse we were treating it as some kind of weird abstraction, and he wanted to disabuse us of such notions:

The theoretical aspect of this verse may look bleak, removed from human life, outside of all our interests. But those who see the implications of it will be aware of how intimate a bearing it has on day-to-day experience. We stand divided in our opinions, and that is inevitable. But when you draw thick boundaries around your opinions and segregate the views of others as irrelevant and false, you are heading toward bigotry....

This particular verse is not to be treated as just a metaphysical abstraction. You should see how intimately it is related to your own

peaceful life, to the joy of your own personal appreciations. There can be a more intimate relationship between things when you recognize the universality of truth and that there are many facets of it. When you see only one aspect and love or hate it, you need to remember that for sure there are many other angles of vision and many other possibilities.

A onetime visitor, David, expressed the typical perception that baffles people about a universal vision. Though a lifetime student of the Kabbalah and the Tarot, he insisted that people should only discuss right and wrong and try to cut away the wrong. It's simply another form of getting the right answer, as if that solves anything. David thought we were leaving out the important stuff in our class: how to distinguish right from wrong, or what was true from what was false. He is right that spirituality can be an excuse for wool gathering, for empty, valueless humming into nothingness, and it is difficult to explain how radically this approach differs from that, how knowing truth and distinguishing right from wrong are two totally different activities with almost no overlap. Interestingly, this is the verse where Nitya makes this as clear as it can be:

Ultimate truth is the totality to which we belong. It is not what we conceive. It is not what we ultimately or absolutely know. It is the total situation to which we belong. And the universality of it is not confined to living beings. Whatever is finds its ground, its stuff, its meaning all within the total reality.

Narayana Guru says here, "In everyday life, most people do not recognize this universality." Most people can speak only from their own standpoint. This he considers as bringing knowledge under the monopoly of one's personal experience. Although in principle this contradicts the very nature of truth, there is no other way for an individual person to know truth, to experience it, to live it and to express it. Thus there is a kind of transactional validity in owning truth and calling it "mine." Does it affect truth? Not at all.

Because Judaism was invoked to account for David's position on right and wrong, the example that came to my mind was how some Israelis are certain that wiping out the neighboring Palestinians and seizing their lands is very good. Palestinians obviously view those acts and attitudes as the epitome of evil, and from a position outside the conflict it certainly looks that way. But if the focus is limited enough, the aggressors can provide endless arguments to support their position, as they have been doing all along, to justify their malign actions. Thus pitting good against evil leads humans into an endless swamp of conflict and injustice. Narayana Guru succeeded in liberating a section of the planet precisely by avoiding that kind of dichotomous thinking. He argued that we are all in this together—our plight is a common predicament that is never solved by the strong side besting the weak. The Buddha, among many others, wholeheartedly agrees.

When we argue over superficial matters we only pretend to be seeking truth. Our real objective is to ratify our false position, to outwit the other guy. Deb reminded me of part of a letter Nitya wrote to her in September of 1971 (it's in *Love and Blessings*) that adroitly hits the nail on the head:

The main vocation of the social animal called man is inventing lies and structuring them into invulnerable systems, and his hobby is pretending to seek Truth. It needs courage to see the mote in one's own eye. It is still greater to pick it out.

This study is for those who have done the preliminary work of sorting out right and wrong behavior. It's really not that difficult, though it is possible to wrangle endlessly over it if we are attached to an inflexible position, as most people are. It's another way we substitute belief for truth. Clinging to beliefs is like building your castle on the sand: you always need to prop up the edifice and fill in the holes that keep appearing. Truth—the totality

to which we belong—has no such limitation. That is where we are going to be putting our energies.

Our class is aimed at reintroducing the lost element of a full and happy life: awareness of the total context. As Bill put it, our concern is how to live an active life but still keep it connected with the source.

Arguing over specific aspects is the basis of conflict. As David pointed out, conflict breeds development. It's dynamic. Again, very true. But opening ourselves to our full potential is also dynamic, possibly vastly more dynamic, and much less conflicting. It's the dimension that truly creative human beings operate within, and it's all too rarely realized. The more typical attitude is divisiveness, competition, and consequent alienation, where the dynamism is directed toward making better weapons of domination. Nitya describes the unfortunate limitations of this attitude beautifully:

Essentially we bifurcate knowledge into 'mine' and 'not mine'. There is no justification for making a cleavage in universal truth. Truth can never be mine; it can never be yours. It is universal. But in the actual experiencing and advocacy of truth we do make such a distinction, however unwarranted it may be. Even the great protagonists of the so-called highest truth, such as the propagandists of religions, claim to have an exclusive knowledge. They call it "my religion" or "my faith." In such cases there is a violation of the universality of truth.

While Nitya's last point is well taken, I make a distinction between the "great protagonists" and the "propagandists" of religion. They are seldom if ever the same people. It's the propagandists who promulgate the idea of mine as opposed to yours. Religion—I know, it's hard to believe—starts out with a universal vision that transcends individual sequestering. Only when the propagandists and preservers step in does it lose its way.



As Deb made clear, the issue here is integrating the universal and the particular, or the transcendental and the immanent, rather than choosing one over the other. Most of us are fixated on the particular and blissfully ignorant of the universal, yet in truth we are not one or the other, we are both together. The synthesis of the universal and the particular produces an emergent condition that is far greater than either one by itself.

Paul, who has been thinking about this subject a lot, gave a good example of hot and cold being relative to each other. When I am cold you may feel warm, and we would disagree about our definition of which is which, but the subject we are arguing about is temperature. Both cold and hot are subsets of temperature, and we are equally interested in temperature, which is the total context. This is also true in the symbolic sense, by the way, where hot and cold refer to our feelings of attraction and repulsion. We should all be able to agree that the item or person and our feelings for them are two different things, and it's tragic if we mistake one for the other by obscuring the person with our opinions about them.

Once again, we begin life consciously aware of only the particular side. Some spirituality focuses only on the transcendental side, disconnected from daily life. It harshly rejects worldly life. The Vedantic thrust is to bring both together, which simultaneously enriches life and affords the empyrean an opportunity to express more of its infinite potentials. I'll again defer to the facilitator of our understanding, Nitya:

Our business is the totality of life, not just an aspect of it, so we should similarly be able to incorporate the unitive principle of a whole truth into our life interest, so that existence, understanding and the evaluation of it can all be centralized.

This is very important. Many of the cherished human values are to be generalized and abstracted, at the same time that they are lived out as specific experiences. Love is one such generalization. Justice is another. Goodness, all moral virtues—these cannot be separate entities. They all belong to one and the same truth. Only when they

can be incorporated into one truth can my justice be your justice, or my love be meaningful to you. Whenever this universality cannot be experienced because of the private coloration that we put into it, people undergo great agony, such as when the authorities' sense of justice is at odds with the populace, or one person's love does not appeal to the object of his love.

Ayomide brought up how she sometimes gets confused when communicating and becomes tongue-tied. She feels she has an intuitive grasp of truth, but in the turmoil of interacting with others she is not able to express it satisfactorily. I agreed that most of us have difficulty with this. She is not alone, by any means.

Deb suggested she should sink into a state of silent witnessing to gather herself together. From that position you can hear what others are saying more clearly, and your own genuine thoughts rise up more easily. She pointed out that when you frame your argument, you are automatically limiting your options.

Still, the problem is that in the midst of chaos it is very hard to find that kind of stillness. David rightly affirmed that that is the reason for meditation: the more you spend time in a calm, centered state, the easier it is to access it at other times. Ideally we want to be centered all the time, but that is a supreme accomplishment. If people give the impression that it's a natural condition for them, I think they are being disingenuous, and probably fooling themselves as well. As Nitya has often said, thoughts like "I am centered" are contradictory, because a truly centered person does not define their state at all.

This is a very good place to admit we are "not there yet," and I'm very glad Ayomide brought it up, because it's a universal problem we can do a lot with by admitting it and helping each other. Our culture is based on yelling loudest more than respectful listening, and is a very difficult training ground for sanity. Some day perhaps the tide will turn, but right now it is going the other way in a torrent. Close your ears and raise your voice!

Vedantins are well aware of the power of words to injure or confuse, as well as educate and uplift. Their meaning is said to explode in the hearer's soul like a bomb. So we should be especially careful in handling such volatile material.

Because we had such a vibrant discussion going, I didn't get a chance to give Ayomide a reassurance. Part of our confusion is due to not having a coherent philosophy to organize our thoughts around. There are so many conflicting ideas floating about, and our thinking is often unmoored to any solid anchoring post. The first step of freeing ourselves from morbid belief systems is to reject them, but then we will be greatly benefitted if we can replace them with a more vibrant one. We have to be careful, certainly, because many promising structural systems are actually the same kind of dead end attitudes in disguise. The Gurukula gurus spent over a hundred years of intense contemplation to rid their philosophy of necrotic and inessential ideas. There is no evangelizing involved, either. Give it a shot. You'll be asked to decide on your own recognizance whether it's what you are looking for. People who are seeking a new form of conditioning to operate under, a new parent figure to submit to, or a distraction from the demands of daily life, won't find what they're seeking here. This is intended to help people grow into themselves, to actualize their highest aspirations as bright sparks of the universe, in the light of Krishna's final blessing to Arjuna at the end of the Bhagavad Gita: "critically scrutinizing all, omitting nothing, do as you like."

## Part II

### *Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum:*

Man has a heritage of knowledge which is expressed through science, technology, theoretical speculations, literary expressions, and formulations of mathematical, logical, semantic, moral and natural laws. It binds all people alike, irrespective of their individual preferences, tastes or factual placement in life. The

underlying principle of all these expressions is the recognition of the oneness of truth. Truth is universal and cannot be monopolized by any person. However, in actual life situations, truth is a fact of individual experience. Not only does a person recognize truth, but he also acknowledges it as his personal conviction.

Experiential truth is centrally coordinated by the knower as a synthesis of what he gathers from his sensory data and intuitive speculation. For that reason, a person puts a circle around his I-consciousness and treats all knowledge that can be legitimately placed within it as belonging to his self and calls it “my knowledge.” By that he is virtually recognizing the existence of knowledge other than his, like that of another person or what is not known to him. Even the protagonists of great religious convictions, who claim to uphold the highest truth, label the truth they declare as their religion or their faith. Such an attitude is certainly opposed to the catholicity of truth.

The incapacity of a person to see beyond the limits of his mental horizon does not alienate the truth he perceives from the one knowledge that is streaming through all minds. The truth that is being manifested in all possible ways and which remains transcendental has no inherent cleavage, and its partial recognition by individuals does not cause any mutilations to truth as such. In his poem Arivu, Narayana Guru says:

What is known here as This  
is not other than Knowledge  
when contemplated on.  
As the Knowledge in This  
is the same in all,  
there is nothing anywhere  
other than knowledge.

The transactional efficiency of knowledge is not only experienced among the members of the human species, but its general communicability is experienced by all beings.

In the Upanishads it is said that a cupful of water will reveal the prime quality of water in all the seven seas, and the iron in a pair of scissors can reveal the property of the iron that is yet to be extracted from the mine. The unity of knowledge is also similar. It is essential to recognize this unity. All the values which man prizes and holds dear to him, such as love, justice and goodness, are derived from one central truth which is equally everybody's and nobody's in particular.

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Nataraja Guru's commentary:

TRUTH can be viewed from one or the other of its ambivalent poles that we have tried to distinguish in the previous verse. Truth is not a third factor that can exist independently of the knower or the known. When this is admitted, we can see that each man's truth is the resultant of the two ambivalent aspects of truth which give meaning or value to that truth for the person concerned. In other words, truth is what attains to an equilibrium between the two poles of the self and the non-self.

Let us think of a straight vertical line between two extreme points representing the possible poles of the self and the non-self. Each man, when he conceives of truth wholeheartedly, must perforce put it at one point or other on this ascending or descending scale of values. Each truth has a personal or ultimate value and could hold interest or be meaningful only to the extent that it falls somewhere in the line joining the self with the non-self. This is a corollary that inevitably follows from the axiomatic form in which the two counterparts of the self and the non-self have been stated to be fundamentally related. To the extent that the truth conceived disinterestedly is purer and more impersonal, the appeal to instinctive dispositions weakens. The transcendental appeal of the glory of truth might increase in intensity at the expense of the

immanent and intimate experience of the same truth. What is lost on one side is gained on the other and, as a value factor that regulates and influences the life of the individual concerned, the one or the other have the same influence, which could be treated as a constant.

An ultimate truth that cannot be conceived by one who is not a high philosophical thinker must still be within his intellectual or emotional reach if it is to have any value-content at all. The object is limited by the subject and vice-versa, making the effective value the same all through if the truth is wholehearted and genuine. The condition of strict bipolarity is what matters. An ordinary devotee might think of his God as having personal attributes while another, more capable of abstract thinking, might think in terms of a scientific Absolute given to reasoning or dialectics. There is a law of inverse squares that may be said to be present here in the reciprocity involved. All forms of faith, if they fall unitively in the vertical scale implied, would be equally respectable - it is in this sense that in the Bhagavad Gita it is stated:

Whatever be the manner in which a person might approach me, even accordingly do I accept him; it is my own path that all mankind do tread in their different ways. (IV. 11)

The controversy in Christian theology relating to the primacy given to 'grace' or to 'works' can be settled when we apply this law of reciprocal or ambivalent values. Faith and works have to go hand in hand unitively.

In the stories of the saints in Tamil literature a canonical status is given to a simple peasant devotee, Kannappa Nayanar, whose faith to Shiva was said to be so great that he was willing to give his own eye to mend the damaged eye of an image that he worshipped wholeheartedly as Shiva. Other canonised saints might have been superior intellectually, but for Kannappa Nayanar, his faith, though

realistic to a childish limit, scored in value or merit equally with the most intellectual of devotees, as legend says. Thomas à Kempis recognizes the same principle in his 'Imitation of Christ'. No faith can strictly be called false and no reasoning unfaithful. Truth and faith lend support to each other.

### Part III

Pratibha sent a word of appreciation:

I particularly like the explanation about knowledge. So reasonably stated, it is convincing. Other Indian writers talk about knowledge being the experiential. Actually knowledge both experiential through meditation and through intellectual discernment is the full path.

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For our closing meditation I read out the following from Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), and asked the group to convert the terms based on what we're learning from the Atmo study. The Gurus propose that contemplation accomplishes essentially the same thing as what these folks were discovering. Speaking of the LSD research at Myron Stolaroff's International Foundation for Advanced Study, Stevens writes:

The Foundation's theoretical Manifesto—*The Psychedelic Experience: A New Concept in Psychotherapy*—was submitted for publication in late 1961. In it, the psychedelic experience was broken into three broad stages: (1) evasive maneuvers, (2) symbolic perception, and (3) immediate perception.

The evasive stage, according to the authors, was what earlier therapists had confused with schizophrenia, leading to LSD's misclassification as a psychotomimetic. What happened was this:

the drug, by its very nature, released such a flood of new thoughts and perceptions that the patient's normal conceptual framework was overwhelmed, producing a panic condition with overtones of paranoia. But with skillful manipulation of set and setting, the therapist could guide the patient smoothly through the evasive stage to the point where the overly famous hallucinations began. These shifting geometrical patterns were a last gasp of the ego which, "having lost the battle to divert attention through unpleasantness, seeks to charm and distract the conscious mind by throwing up a smokescreen of hallucinations to hide the inner knowledge which it fears."

Actually, the hallucinatory level was a preparation for the realm of symbolic perception, which was where the psycholyticians spent most of their time, deciphering the curious symbolic patois: "The subject constantly works off repressed material and unreality structures, false concepts, ideas, and attitudes, which have been accumulated through his life experiences. Thus a form of psychological cleansing seems to accompany the subjective imagery. This results in considerable ventilation and release almost independent of intellectual clarification. Gradually the subject comes to see and accept himself, not as an individual with 'good' and 'bad' characteristics, but as one who simply is."

But there was also a higher level still. Past the symbolic stage was a land of no boundaries:

The central perception, apparently of all who penetrate deeply in their explorations, is that behind the apparent multiplicity of things in the world of science and common sense there is a single reality, in speaking of which it seems appropriate to use such words as *infinite* and *eternal*.

As Abram Hoffer had told the last Macy Conference, if you could lead a patient to this point, then nine times out of ten a cure would miraculously occur. Why this happened was not easily explained in psychological terms (as Leary had realized when he decided to opt



for the rhetoric of applied mysticism). But it seemed to be something like this: overwhelmed by the realization that one was an “imperishable self rather than a destructible ego,” the patient underwent a kind of psychic expansion, in which “the many conflicts which are rooted in lack of self acceptance are cut off at the source, and the associated neurotic behavior patterns begin to die away.” As the self expanded, it burst the webbing of unhappy relationships that had tethered it to the ground. (179-180)

[The included quotes are taken from the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry*, Nov-Dec, 1962]

Is this meaningless? Here’s what they found back when studies were allowed:

The Foundation was not reticent about the data it was seeing. Seventy-eight percent of its patients claimed an increased ability to love; 69 percent felt they could handle hostility better, with an equal percentage believing that their ability to communicate with and understand others had improved; 71 percent claimed an increase in self-esteem, and 83 percent returned from the Other World with the conviction that they had brushed against “a higher power, or ultimate reality.”

Robert Mogar, the Foundation’s expert in such diagnostic tools as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, had never seen anything that could produce the kind of dramatic changes that LSD routinely produced. (178)

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Jake’s commentary:

With this verse, the Guru and Nitya move further into the social/ethical aspect of mind, the “I will” dimension. Having arrived through “I feel” and “I think” to the point at which we

compel ourselves to act, we enter the inevitable realm of limitation and distortion. Embodied sensual beings, we proceed to interact with others by way of language. Reduced to our single body's sense information and our narrow colorations provided by our particular samskaras/vasanas, we go about our conscious aware social lives expressing ourselves by way of our verbalized language that represents but can never be that which we think we know regardless of our achievements in erudition.

To this general conundrum, Nitya and the Guru address their thoughts in Verse 60. It is in this commentary that Nitya locates first of all the essential motivation behind our wishing to communicate in the first place: our desire to express truth. At its core, truth is the unchangeable Absolute, but it is also known to our embodied selves as that which we perceive by way of that isolated vessel. The necessity of somatic existence by its very character narrows our capacity to perceive truth which is limitless and unaffected by our particular vision of it. Truth is that which remains constant and makes up all that is. Capable of glimpsing this only partially, we essentially go about attempting to communicate our message to anyone willing to listen. For most, however, that partial truth owned by their I-ego becomes the whole truth and, on the other hand, property of the I at the same time. This bifurcated knowledge or truth then becomes the property of some and denied others. The advocating of our "truth" clearly denotes that it is not only nothing of the sort any more because it has taken on the dualities necessary for it to function and be part of the play of maya—completely embedded in the world of necessity and neatly separated from the Absolute as one.

The world of samsara is made of those bent on championing their truth, a central tenet baked into the American political formulation. As Mark Twain once remarked, America promotes the one true god, "several of them." The gods of collectivism and of individual self-reliance meet on that political playing field without the tempering quality of an ethnic folk history to draw from. Unlike other national entities grounded in a Germanic,

Greek, Russian or even French sensibility, for instance, the US was from its inception reduced to words (or runes) on a page representing high minded but exceptionally esoteric principles. Out of these intangibles has emerged an assumption that “the American people” somehow embody these abstract virtues by dint of their occupying some space geographically identified as the United States of America. This illusion can obtain only as long as ethnic identity politics takes a back seat to the “originalist’s” construction, the formulations pointed to in our two “founding” documents. The yawning abyss between that *conservative* (or perhaps Libertarian) position and the *progressive* identity politics of the left gets exacerbated by the absence of a familiar, pre-existing ethnic identity established on the emotional energy of a pre-rational foundation. In short, the US *Constitution/Declaration* documents are works of the rational mind that bypass the emotional muscle that is required in order to make ideas, per se, resonate in the world of transaction. Ideas, in and of themselves, contain no energy, which is the province of emotion. The sequencing of our steps in functioning in the world of becoming—from the motivating pre-rational (I feel) to the calculating reason (I think) to the volitional (I will), has been, in the American experience, short-circuited by an implicit assumption that our logical and emotional elements operate independently.

In its own way, this general understanding is itself a direct application of Descartes *Cogito*—“I think therefore I am”—a claim that privileges a partial truth while it masquerades as a universal one. As Nitya points out in his commentary, this claim of universal truth is always an error: “the highest truth cannot be articulated because as soon as you articulate you conceptualize,” and are bound by the limitations of the mind/body (p. 413).

Everyone intellectualizes to a different degree and in all cases we work with incomplete information. As Nitya points out, “to hate someone for intellectualizing is an example of truth being monopolized.” On the other hand, criticizing someone else for a lack of that same intellectual capacity is another example of that

same monopolizing. By first recognizing all truths as partial, we can come to terms with the contradictions everywhere present and accept this condition as what *is*. The second part of the teaching of this verse, writes Nitya, is that “there is only one knowledge and that is the knowledge with which you know” (p. 411). What you think you know, the object of your knowledge, can only be a narrow flicker of that with which you know you know—that which is true for us all.